

CATALOGING RETROSPECTIVE CONVERSION PROJECT AT THE GOLDTHWAIT POLAR LIBRARY AND THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Lynn Lay
Goldthwait Polar Library
Byrd Polar Research Center
The Ohio State University
1090 Carmack Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1002
USA

ABSTRACT: In 1996 the Byrd Polar Research Center at The Ohio State University completed an internal and external review. The review committee strongly recommended that the Goldthwait Polar Library's (GPL) holdings be added to the online catalog of the Ohio State University Libraries to allow for more accessibility of the collections. The Ohio State University Libraries is a member of OhioLINK. OhioLINK is a network of Ohio academic libraries that share online central catalog resources and provides document delivery of materials to member libraries. Working with the technical services department of OSU Libraries a strategy for this project was completed. The cataloging retrospective conversion project began in earnest in 1997. The GPL began to update item records in the online catalog, beginning with the main stacks. This paper is an overview of the project, and will discuss the changes in procedures and services in the library with the completion of the project.

KEYWORDS: cataloging; academic libraries, online catalogs; library networks; OhioLINK; Goldthwait Polar Library; Ohio State University Libraries

Background Information

The Goldthwait Polar Library (GPL) was established in 1969 with the donation of Dr. Richard P. Goldthwait's personal polar library to the Institute of Polar Studies. More donations from other members of the Institute followed. A small budget was allocated for serials and new acquisitions. In the beginning, the holdings were not cataloged using any classification system. They were just on shelves for members of the Institute to use. Over the years the library has seen many transitions in cataloging procedures. Crudely typed catalog cards that contained only basic information were made. Then cards were produced on a word processing system (not a personal computer) using AACR2 and LC classification. The official card catalog closed in 1990 and up until this year a shelf list file was produced using WordPerfect on a PC. The library's holdings were added to the

first edition of *PolarPac*. The library did not continue to add holdings to the database because of budget constraints.

In 1996 the Byrd Polar Research Center completed an internal and external review. While the library received high marks for service and for the resources available in the library, the external review committee strongly recommended that the library's holdings be made more accessible to the OSU community and the polar research community. With this recommendation in mind, the director of the Center and the librarian met with the assistant director of Technical Services and the director of the Ohio State University Libraries (OSUL) to determine how to implement this project. OSU Libraries has successfully completed several cataloging retrospective conversion projects for other libraries that were not actually department libraries of OSUL. They knew what needed to be done. They agreed to work with the Byrd Center to add the holdings to their online catalog, OSCAR. The cataloging retrospective conversion project began in earnest in 1997.

The Agreement

The Ohio State University Libraries is one of the founding members of OhioLINK and a member of OCLC. OhioLINK is a network of Ohio academic libraries that share an on-line central catalog and electronic resources. The OhioLINK network provides document delivery of materials to member libraries. OSU Libraries maintains their own online public access catalog, OSCAR (<http://www.lib.ohio-state.edu>), but they also are a major contributor to the OhioLINK central catalog (<http://www.ohiolink.edu>). Over 50 libraries throughout the state of Ohio participate in the network. OhioLINK supports cross-institutional patron initiated borrowing of materials. Document delivery of requested items is handled by the owning institution and the material is usually delivered to the library user within three days time. The network maintains over 60 electronic research databases, such as *Periodical Abstracts* and *Biological Abstracts*. They maintain an online electronic journal site. These shared resources decrease the cost for individual libraries while allowing users to select from a wider variety of information resources. For more information about OhioLINK read Hawks (1992) and Kohl (1997). They discuss in detail the rationale for providing these services to Ohio library users and the how the network functions.

By adding the GPL's holdings to OSU Libraries online catalog, the GPL in essence agreed to also share its monographic holdings with OhioLINK member patrons, with very few exceptions. Some of the material in the GPL was donated by Byrd Center members with the understanding that the material would always be available in the library when needed, or in the worst case scenario, in someone's office down the hall. This donated material may or may not circulate at the donor's discretion. The serials will not circulate. We have agreed to photocopy for free any articles requested by OhioLINK members. The reprint collection in the library will not be added to OSCAR but will remain as an internal resource for BPRC members and other library users who are aware of its existence. The library also agreed to have regular set hours during the week so that

the library is accessible to anyone on campus. We agreed to follow the circulation procedures and policies of the OSU Libraries.

Technical Process of the Project

The actual technical process of the project was made possible because of the considerable investment on the part of OSU Libraries. OSU Libraries donated computer equipment and their valuable technical support and expertise to the project. They provided the GPL with a new computer that allowed for both staff access and patron access. The new computer came equipped with a barcode scanner and the GPL received barcodes to attach to all of their monographic holdings. Several days of training were needed to acquaint the librarian with how to update records in the staff version of the online catalog. There were many rules and regulations regarding the updating of records, such as assigning copy numbers, call numbers and cutter parsing. To expedite this process we decided to begin by updating only the titles that had exact matches.

All of the book covers were discarded and then barcodes were attached to each individual book. Using the shelf list as the authority and handling each book, the titles are searched for matching records in OSCAR. If there is not a match, the book is tagged with a pink slip and returned to the shelf. If there is an exact match, the record is updated to reflect another copy. If the call number is different, this information is included in the record. Because the library is adding only duplicate titles at this time, no matter what copy number we assigned to a particular book, the copy will always be a copy 2 or more in OSCAR. We must rely on the barcode as the unique identifier since relabeling all of the books in the collection would be a formidable task. For new acquisitions, those published in 1997 and 1998, the GPL puts some items on hold for a short time and waits to see if OSUL has purchased a copy of the book. This procedure will eliminate the problems of spine labels not matching the records in OSCAR.

While the project is by no means complete, we have finished one of the collections in the main stacks. Out of 1338 records checked in OSCAR, 708 titles (approximately 52%) were unique to the GPL. At this time we do not know how many of the titles will have records in OCLC and how many will need to have original cataloging.

All of the item records are now suppressed in OSCAR and are accessible only in the staff mode. When all of the duplicate titles have been added the records will be unsuppressed and made available to the public. Those titles that are unique will be added near the end of the project. The GPL will copy the title pages, versos of the title pages and record the call numbers. The Technical Services Department of OSUL has agreed to add this cataloging task to their own, already considerable, work quota.

Our library now has access to OCLC in the "view only" mode. We cannot update or add any records. We can of course have that capability "turned on" but that would necessitate more comprehensive training and supervision than we currently have. We might be able to lessen the burden for OSUL by recording OCLC numbers on the photocopies we

submit to them. We can also send the shelf list records in our WordPerfect file although they may not be standardized enough to be of practical use. For example, our shelf list does not include the size of the book in the description area. Our shelf list does not contain as much information as the records in OSCAR.

Updating the serial holdings will be the final stage of the project. Very few of the GPL serials are bound. This complicates the issue of adding volumes to the serial records in OSCAR. The GPL may need to resort to a general "library has" statement for each serial title. Converting our serial check-in records to the online system OSUL uses is an option which has been discussed. This is feasible from a technological standpoint, but may prove to be too cumbersome in reality. The serials received by OSUL are sent to a central location in the main library while the GPL's serials will continue to be received directly. Perhaps there is another approach that we can use to regularly update our "library has" statements to ensure that our OSCAR records are reliable.

When the records are unsuppressed, the GPL will rely on the online circulation system of OSU Libraries. We now use a manual check out system, which means that we produce check out cards and book labels. This will no longer be necessary; we will only produce a spine label. Using the online circulation system will eventually mean less work for the library staff. We will have accurate library circulation statistics and better inventory control. We are now using this project as an inventory control mechanism. On the shelf list cards, we are noting whether the books are found on the shelf. The books that are manually checked out now will need to be recalled so that we can update records in OSCAR. This will be inconvenient for the patrons, but it is necessary to complete the project.

These changes in procedures will also mean that some of the library's patrons will need to be "retrained." They will not be allowed to keep a book for a year without officially acknowledging that they have it. They will need to renew their checked-out items on a regular basis. Byrd Center members will retain 24 hour access to the library, but they must be more accountable for the material they use.

When we are officially online we will not know when someone is looking at our holdings and if he has decided to come to the library. If that patron does show up at our door, we want to make sure that what is listed as available is actually on the shelf and can be checked out to him. The library will need to be staffed with at least one person during our posted hours. The library is now staffed with only one librarian and one or two student assistants. If the librarian is not in, Byrd Center members have their own keys and are for the most part, self-sufficient users of the collection. Obviously, we will need to guarantee library coverage to assist users unfamiliar with the collection. We may have shortened, regular hours, such as 1-5 p.m., Monday through Friday in the beginning. If library usage substantially increases, we can adjust the schedule accordingly. We will then need to train student library assistants to use the circulation system and give them the responsibility of managing the library in the librarian's absence.

Services to Users

The Byrd Center scientists and graduate students are the primary users of the GPL. We want to maintain the same level of service to them as we have in the past. These services include document delivery of articles and books located throughout the different OSU Libraries on campus. We process our own interlibrary loan requests and do our own reference work. The GPL will continue to manage the Publication Distribution Program for the Center. The completion of this cataloging retrospective conversion project and the agreement between the GPL and the OSUL should enable the GPL to be managed more efficiently with better results. We should have more time to work on other projects, such as updating the reprint collection.

In 1992 the Byrd Polar Research Center permanently moved to a new location designated as West Campus, away from main central campus. This gave the Byrd Center and the library much more needed space but also isolated us from other departments on campus. The GPL is now the only library situated on West Campus. A significant number of Center members have appointments in other departments and have elected to stay on main campus. Because of the size of the OSU campus, it requires effort to visit us and use our facilities. With the completion of this project those members will be able to verify the holdings in the GPL from their own offices and can even request material to be delivered to them without leaving main campus.

Conclusion

In 1978, at the 7th Northern Libraries Colloquy in Paris, Susan Schley, then the librarian at the Institute, concluded her presentation about the Goldthwait Polar Library by stating:

At present, we do not have the money or the staff or the expertise to catalog and automate our library. I consider this to be a long range project, but one that we should be investigating now. Hopefully, we can start laying the groundwork so that an efficient transition can take place in the future. I think such a transition is necessary and inevitable. Meanwhile as librarian of the Goldthwait Polar Library, I would like to adopt a middle way that is both forward looking and realistic. I feel that we have a good collection of polar information and there is great potential for making it more widely available." (Schley 1982).

Twenty years later, money is still tight and library staffing is still a concern for the Goldthwait Polar Library. Despite these persistent issues, we now have a realistic solution to the problem of access to the collection. With the enormous technical support of the OSU Libraries, our holdings will not only be accessible to library users at OSU and throughout Ohio, but also to anyone, anywhere via the internet. We do not know the impact this will have on the daily operations of the library. We will wait and see. We need to be flexible and make adjustments when they are needed. We are confident that this collaboration with The Ohio State University Libraries will result in better library

management. Their technical expertise and experience will only improve and strengthen the services the Goldthwait Polar Library has to offer its users.

REFERENCES

- Hawks, C.P. 1992. The integrated library system of the 1990s: the OhioLINK experience. *Library Resources & Technical Services* 36(1):61-77.
- Kohl, D.F. 1997. Resource sharing in a changing Ohio environment. *Library Trends* 45(3):435-447.
- Schley, S. 1982. The Richard P. Gold[sic]wait library. In: *Arctica 1978: VII^e Congrès International Des Bibliothèques Nordiques* (ed. by J. Malaurie & S. Devers), pp. 271-272. Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris.